

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge receipt of the Final Office Action dated November 15, 2004, and the Advisory Action dated March 8, 2005. Claims 12-19 and 22-36 are pending in the application. The Examiner has allowed claims 12-19 and 25-36. The Examiner has objected to claim 24. In addition, the Examiner has rejected claims 22 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Hebert et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,878,818 ("*Hebert*"). By this response, claims 22 and 23 are cancelled, and claim 24 is amended. Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable over the art of record and respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

I. Claim 24 is allowable.

The Examiner has objected to claim 24 as "being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." (Final Office Action, pg. 3). By this response, Applicants have amended claim 24 to include the recitations of claim 22. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the objection and allow claim 24.

II. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration, allowance of the pending claims and a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned if the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case.

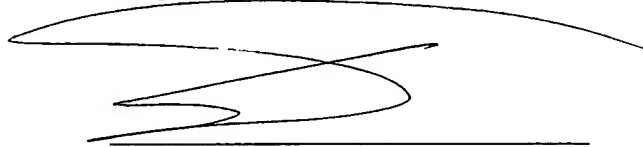
In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This

Appl. No. 10/629,990
Response to Final Office Action
Dated November 15, 2004

discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art that have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required or have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account Number 03-2769.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tod T. Tumey', is written over a horizontal line.

Tod T. Tumey
PTO Reg. No. 47,146
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.
P.O. Box 3267
Houston, TX 77253-3267
(713) 238-8000 (Phone)
(713) 238-8008 (Fax)
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANTS